

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, AG, SS, SA
SUBJECT: SAHARA: BOUTEFLIKA SETS OUT END OF YEAR ALGERIAN VIEWS;
LITTLE HOPE SEEN

1. ALGERIAN PRESS DECEMBER 30 CARRIES UNDATED TEXT OF MESSAGE
FROM GOA FRONMIN BOUTEFLIKA TO UN SECY GEN WALDHEIM ON SAHARA.
MAIN POINTS INCLUDE:

2. PURPOSE OF LETTER IS TO PERMIT WALDHEIM TO ARRIVE AT
"PRECISE EVALUATION OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND SPECULATIONS"
ABOUT SAHARA PORBLEM. UN, OAU AND NON-ALIGNED HAVE BEEN PRE-
OCCUPIED WITH THIS ISSUE.

3. SAUDI "GOOD WILL MISSION," THOUGH UNDERTAKEN WITH BEST
OF INTENTIONS, HAS REMAINED UNFORTUNATELY WITHOUT RESULT.
MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN THESE WELL-KNOWN. THEY REMAIN UNCHANGED.
AS FAR AS ALGERIA IS CONCERNED, AS SOON AS SAHRAOUI PEOPLE
ARE DEMOCRATICALLY CONSULTED UNDER INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES,
ALGERIA WILL SPARE NO EFFORT TO RESTORE ITS RELATIONS WITH
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ITS NEIGHBORS TO PREVIOUS LEVEL, AND, INSOFAR AS IT DEPENDS
ON ALGERIA, TO IMPROVE THEM."

4. SAUDI ACTION HAS SUCCEEDED IN ASSURING THREE COUNTRIES
THAT AMONG THE OTHERS "THERE EXISTS NEITHER BELLICOSE INTEN-
TIONS NOR PREPARATIONS FOR WAR."

5. SOLUTION OF SAHARA PROBLEM "TIED TO RETURN OF SAHRAOUI POPULATIONS... UNDER CONDITIONS PERMITTING THEM TO EXERCISE FREELY THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION... IN THIS CONTEXT, THERE HAS BEEN PROPOSED FORMULA OF IDENTIFICATION FOR SAHRAOUI BASED ON CENSUS CARRIED OUT BY SPAIN AS ADMINISTERING POWER. SUCH APPROACH, ON THIS SPECIFIC POINT, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FAVORABLY IN CAPITALS CONCERNED. IF IT IS CLEAR THAT ALGERIA'S POSITION RESTS ON PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION... MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, UNFORTUNATELY, FOR THE MOMENT SEEM ONLY TO ENVISAGE ANNEXATION BY FORCE. SUCH POSITION CAN ONLY AIM AT LEGALIZING FAIT ACCOMPLI."

6. ALGERIA "HAS NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AND HARBORS NO ECONOMIC DESIGNS."

7. WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM REMAINS AS IT WAS.

8. COMMENT: BOUTEFLIKA DECOROUSLY DOWNPLAYS SAUDI INITIATIVE AND ENDS ON UNCOMPROMISING NOTE. THERE APPEARS TO BE SLIGHT WAFFLING ON PROPOSAL FOR USING SPANISH CENSUS FIGURES AS BASIS FOR CONSULTATION OF SAHRAOUI, BUT WE SUSPECT BOUTEFLIKA SIMPLY PROTECTING ALGERIAN PRINCIPLE OF "SELF DETERMINATION." TONE OF LETTER AND REFERENCE TO "FAIT ACCOMPLI" SUGGEST THAT ALGERIANS REALIZE FULL WELL THAT SUCH A REFERENDUM UNDER PROPOSED CONDITIONS WOULD BE "FOR THE FORM," AS HASSAN HAS INDICATED.

9. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HERE RECENTLY INDICATED TO THIRD-COUNTRY DIPLOMAT THAT ALGERIANS WOULD NO LONGER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEMAND FULL WITHDRAWAL OF MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN TROOPS AND ADMINISTRATION FROM TERRITORY DURING REFERENDUM PROCESS; THEY WOULD JUST HAVE TO "STAY IN THEIR CASERNES." WHILE SOME VARIATION OF THIS PROPOSAL MAY ULTIMATELY PROVE WAY OUT, BOUTEFLIKA'S YEAR-END MESSAGE UNHELPFUL IN POINTING WAY. LYNE

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